

Land Use Maps Reach Half-way Point



The Land Use Mapping phase of the Indianapolis Insight Comprehensive Planning Process is nearing the halfway point. The Lawrence Township Planning Area and the first phase of the Perry Township/Beech Grove Planning Area have been completed. They join the Pike Township and the Wayne Township Planning Areas that were completed in late 2002.

Lawrence Township Planning Area

During the Lawrence Township Land Use mapping phase, city staff met with residents and concerned citizens of Lawrence Township over the course of six meetings, from January to May. All meet-

ings proceeded smoothly and on schedule, with the exception of one cancellation due to snow.

One notable aspect of the Lawrence Township plan is the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Lawrence Township has two Wellhead Protection Areas, a large amount of natural woodlands and a significant amount of streams and rivers with slopes greater than 10%. City staff took into consideration of the environmentally sensitive areas when recommending densities to be compatible with their site. The proposed Lawrence Township plan includes three recommendations for Village Mixed-Use. Two of these recommendations are for the former

Fort Benjamin Harrison and the town of Oaklandon. Village Mixed Use was designated for Fort Benjamin Harrison to help protect the development guidelines set by the Fort Harrison Reuse Authority, and for Oaklandon to help preserve its small town character.

Additionally, Village Mixed-Use was recommended for the area at 38th Street and Carroll Road. This is the first time this recommendation has been made for an area where no village has previously existed. Residents see the potential for a "New Urbanism" type community that focuses on design issues to help promote a pedestrian oriented "village" or small town atmosphere.

City staff identified and proposed an additional 173 acres of parkland for Lawrence Township.

City staff also identified several potential rapid transit stops and stations in the Binford Boulevard area.

A presentation of the updated Plan has been made to the Lawrence City Council.

Perry Township/Beech Grove Planning Area

Meetings in this Planning Area began in January and were held every three weeks through the middle of May.

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Planning and Zoning and Knowing the Differences

The world of city planning can seem confusing to those unfamiliar with the terms and tools commonly used by planners and other city staff, whose role is highly technical in nature. Two topics that are commonly the cause of confusion are the Comprehensive Plan and zoning.

In order to clarify, the relationship between these two topics needs to expand. The two are not in conflict with each other, as sometimes suspected. Rather, the Comprehensive Plan is a component used in the development of zoning.

The Comprehensive Plan is required by state statute as a basis for zoning. It is a detailed guide for development, that contains policies, maps, text and critical areas, which are areas that require special attention above the rest of the plan. Among other functions, the Comprehensive Plan quite simply designates the most appropriate land use for all parcels of land in Indianapolis and explains the basis for those recommendations.

Several different interrelated components make up the Comprehensive Plan, probably the most well known of which is the general land use map. Other important elements that compose the Comprehensive Plan include thoroughfare, corridor, neighborhood, redevelopment, and park plans.

These individual plans are prepared by different divisions of planning within the Department of Metropolitan Development, and implemented by several different governmental bodies, including the City-County Council, the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC) and the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA).

The land use map is not the only document guiding the way for future changes in the city. Indianapolis also utilizes sub-area plans, which are prepared as a part of the planning process. A sub-area is a smaller region within the city, usually a neighborhood or group of neighborhoods, a corridor following a major road, or an area that the city deems important and in need of special attention.

These sub-areas have their own plans, prepared much in the same way as the comprehensive plan, although usually more detailed and covering a wider range of aspects. In order to avoid redundancy and confusion, the areas guided under a sub-area plan are not included in the update of the Indianapolis Comprehensive Plan.

Once the plans are completed, they can be approved or denied by the MDC. However, a newly approved plan does not automatically affect existing land uses, but is implemented over time as property owners propose changes. The plan is purely a set of guidelines and principles to be followed in order to improve the quality of the city, as it experiences growth and development.

The plan most directly affects changes in land use through zoning, since the Comprehensive Plan is the legal basis for zoning ordinances. Zoning is a legal description of what is allowed to take place on a piece of land, including the type of activity, the intensity, and the constraints and requirements for physical structures.

Zoning outlines specific permitted uses and development standards to which property owners must comply. In its most basic sense, zoning was established to protect property rights and values; protecting you from your neighbors and your neighbors from you.

Therefore, the city's Comprehensive Plan is prepared to be used as a tool when deciding on questions posed about changing zones and applying them to land in a fair and efficient manner in the future.

The city's MDC hears zoning petitions and either approves or denies them. By state law, the MDC must pay reasonable regard to five items when making its decision: the first of which is the Comprehensive Plan. The other four items that the MDC must closely regard are the

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Comprehensive Plan Recognizes Historic Land Use Patterns

As our knowledge and understanding of the way cities grow and function continues to expand, we can begin to recognize that some forms of development are more successful, accessible and desirable in certain types of areas.

A closer examination of the life of cities, finds that people thrive on spontaneous, and unplanned circumstantial interaction with people and their surroundings. Complex, multifaceted urban spaces bring people together in different ways, creating the kind of interaction and synergy for which these exciting places are known.

One of the forms of development that warrants a new land use category in the comprehensive plan is Urban Mixed-use. Only recently have planners rediscovered the value gained from enhancing this spontaneity and mixing a wealth of urban uses—whereby questioning the need to separate work, shopping, home life, and play.

This land use category consists of existing areas of densely developed, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use (primarily commercial) development, within the historic central city and first generation suburban areas of Indianapolis. The development pattern varies from location to location, but typically includes multi-story buildings located at or near right-of-ways, with entrances and large windows facing the street. This style of development encourages high levels of sidewalk activity.

Parking is typically found at the side or rear of the building. Originally, the building uses for these locations were primarily retail, with services on the ground floor

and offices or apartments on upper floors. By following this pattern of development, pedestrian, rather than automobile-oriented travel is encouraged for most daily trips. Increasing the proximity of residential units to retail and service outlets greatly reduces the need for auto travel, and by incorporating aesthetically-conscious design practices,



An example of pedestrian oriented development.

“...people thrive on spontaneous and unplanned circumstantial interaction with people and their surroundings..”

the quality of housing and retail do not suffer from their extremely close proximity to each other.

Another benefit to this type of land use is the ease with which it can be made compatible with public transportation. Higher densities of people and destinations more readily support public transportation

options.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) has become a popular new form of development. The concept is based on the premise that a development will center around a public transportation hub, encouraging transit utilization over the use of private automobiles as the primary mode of transportation. Portland, Oregon is one of the best examples of successful, popular TODs being incorporated into a city's plan.

Of course, such development is not really new. The old railroad suburbs outside Boston, Philadelphia, New York and Chicago all focused on a village center, a kind of pedestrian node, in the midst of primarily single-family residential towns. The creation of this kind of a unique place within the undifferentiated fabric of suburban or neighborhood residential development is a real opportunity that should be protected and encouraged.

Future development in these areas should maintain the historic fabric of the existing development. This category is also has potential for new development, used in areas where it is appropriate to develop new, small (less than 5-acre) retail uses that serve the immediate neighborhood.

The plan anticipates that developments following this recommendation, would result from a public input process. Getting residents involved and vested in the process early, insures a more successful project, by creating a sense of ownership and working to make sure the needs of all types of people are met.

Insight Implementation Committee Continues On Course

The Indianapolis Insight Implementation Committee began its work in December of 2002. The Committee was formed by the Mayor to guide implementation of the recommendations developed during the first phase of the Comprehensive Plan update process: the Indianapolis Insight Community Values Component.

The 283 recommendations contained in the Plan were divided into four parts: Land Use, Recommended Ordinance and Procedure Changes, Development Methods, and Supporting Issues. After reviewing one of these parts, the committee then prioritizes its recommendations. So far the committee has prioritized the Land Use recommendations and is close to completing their prioritization of the Recommended Ordinance and Procedure Changes.

The Plan contained 29 Land Use

recommendations. As the Committee prioritized these items, recommendations concerning redevelopment and open space rose to the top of the list. The five items that receive the highest ratings were:

- Continue to redevelop blighted and deteriorating areas proactively and in partnerships among the City, local non-profit developments, neighborhood associations, community centers and for-profit developers.
- Return relatively new but large vacant or under-used structures, and the land they sit on, to productive use.
- Assemble and preserve lands and corridors for regional scale parks, open space, recreation needs and natural areas.
- Strongly discourage use of parkland for non-park purposes.
- Consider the development of new

“mixed income and use neighborhoods” on underutilized land, including large retail sites and shopping centers that are now obsolete.

The committee’s work has been presented to the Metropolitan Development Commission and the Division managers within the Department of Metropolitan Development. In this way the recommendations can start to become part of the Department’s “corporate culture”.

Once the committee has prioritized the all the Plan’s recommendations they will monitor the progress toward achieving the goals of the recommendations. The Committee may also be involved in instituting some of the recommendations.

Halfway Point

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In addition to Perry Township this Planning Area included the entire City of Beech Grove and a portion of southeastern Center Township that had not been previously planned. However the western one-third of Perry Township was not included in the planning process at this time. As the planning process was starting the State of Indiana announced that its favored route for the extension of I-69 would run through the western part of Perry Township. City staff persons decide to postpone planning in the vicinity of the proposed route until mid-2004. By that time, it is expected that more will be known about the proposed Interstate highway’s future route and its effects on the current road system.

Notable aspects of the Perry Township/Beech Grove Plan are the designation of two Village Mixed-Use areas and 167 acres of proposed new parkland. The Village Mixed-Use recommendations were used to help maintain and enhance the special character of Main Street in Beech Grove and the historic portion of the City of Southport.

Perry Township has one of the lowest parkland-to-population ratios in the county. To counter this situation six new parks have been proposed. Additionally expansions of Bluff Park, Tolin-Akeman Park, Hartman Park and Sarah Bolton Park have been recommended.

Commercial encroachment into residential areas was also a major topic in the meetings of the Perry Township plan. The need to protect

existing neighborhoods led to Critical Area designations for Madison Avenue and Emerson Avenue.

Other critical area designations were established to:

- Protect a residential area from industrial encroachment,
- Call attention to potential park land, and
- Potential rapid transit stops and stations.

Presentations of the updated Plan have been made to the City Councils of Southport, Homewood and Beech Grove.

The new Land Use Maps will be adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission for the entire county upon the completion of the planning processes for all eight Planning Areas. This is expected to occur in mid to late 2004.

What Happens to Big-Box Stores When They Die?

While many people may be familiar with terms such as greenfields, which are undeveloped rural lands, and brownfields, which are sites that have real or perceived contamination—the word greyfield describes a more novel and growing problem.

A greyfield is not necessarily a field or open space, much like greenfields and brownfields are. In general, the term applies to retail or commercial sites that are no longer economically viable. Greyfields are most commonly out-dated malls and large retail buildings that can no longer provide the stream of income they once did. These sites are usually located within older segments of urban communities and in older suburban areas.

But where do greyfields come from? As cities grow, the population tends to move outward pulling along the shops and stores they frequent. Companies locate new stores on the urban edge, where

the newer residents are locating. Meanwhile, the older retail establishments located closer to the heart of the urban area can no longer draw the same number of customers. Finding a tenant able to turn a profit becomes more and more difficult as shoppers continue to migrate outward into suburban areas.

Neighborhoods within the city experiencing shifts in populations also experience shifting retail demands. As the demographics change in some neighborhoods, the new residents may no longer support the same types of retail that former residents once did.

The old stores may be abandoned, creating an eyesore on the streetscape, an ugly and ever-present reminder of dwindling economic activity in the neighborhood.

As one store closes it often starts a domino effect. Since shoppers typically visit more than one store at a time and as the synergy created by many stores begins to

break down, more and more stores are left with little decision but to close their doors.

Another reason many stores and malls within the city have trouble attracting patrons is the perceived deterioration of the central hub of the city. Old storefronts and retail designs aren't as appealing as newly built stores; big, bright, shiny new stores have tremendous power to draw in customers.

Aside from the novelty, another advantage of new stores is the relative ease with which they are financed. Constructing a new building in a greenfield is often cheaper for the developer than renovating an existing store. That is because new stores tend to be bigger than they were, selling a bigger selection, and ultimately generating more profit.

As the parent company develops a new prototype for store construction, it would like to see all outlets architecturally consis-

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Committee Work on the Regional Center Plan Nears Completion

Updated every ten years, recommendations from the Indianapolis Regional Center Plan are designed to enhance life in the Regional Center while acting as a guide to growth and development for downtown Indianapolis. This year's update, Regional Center Plan: 2020 (RCP), addresses issues related to economic development, accessibility and the environment within the city's regional center. Serving as the blueprint for future development in Indianapolis, RCP: 2020 acts as the public's best platform for change within their communities.

Functioning as the "downtown" for the City of Indianapolis, the "Regional Center" is bounded by

I-65 and I-70 to the east; the Belt Railroad to the west; I-70 to the south and 16th Street to the north. Activities within this area far surpass the limits of the Regional Center, with key services provided to the city, the state and a host of businesses and communities across the globe. While it functions as the downtown for the City of Indianapolis, the impact of Regional Center activities reach far beyond the City limits. Examples of institutions anchoring the downtown include: federal courts and offices; state courts and offices; Indiana State Museum and Library; Indiana Statehouse and Government Center; Indianapolis Convention Center and

hotels; sports and entertainment complexes; educational facilities, medical centers; national and international headquarters; and research facilities. Additionally, more than 100,000 Hoosiers work each day at jobs located in the Regional Center.

At present, there are six committees consisting of a total of over 300 people working to develop committee reports that include goals, objectives, projects and programs to guide the growth of the downtown. Committee work will be complete in June. It will then become the work of the Steering Committee to craft an overall plan from the reports of the six committees.

As the Indianapolis Metropolitan Region continues to grow and gain population, it will have to deal with the potential repercussions and realities for its success as an emerging "big city." Traffic congestion, one of the biggest headaches for residents living in a major metropolitan area, is getting worse and shows no signs of waning.

To address growing concern over transportation options in the region, Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization has undertaken an 18-24 month study titled "DIRECTIONS: A Rapid Transit Study To Improve Regional Mobility."

The express purpose of the study is to evaluate the viability and cost-effectiveness of a rapid transit system to help reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and increase mobility options. The study will take place in several phases and gather expert and public input before making final recommendations.

The first phase will focus on developing a comprehensive list of potential transit corridors through-

Meeting Dates...

Continued from page 8

Area includes two sections of eastern Center Township not covered by a neighborhood plan, as well as all portions of Warren Township, except for those areas covered in several of the city's sub-area plans, which are as follows:

- 38th Street and Shadeland Area Plan
- Consolidated East Side Area Plan
- Town of Cumberland Comprehensive Plan
- Far Eastside Neighborhood Plan
- Irvington Neighborhood Plan, and

out the city. By examining traffic counts and roadway demand, planners can identify those routes that could benefit from less congestion and would also have the number of riders to support a transit system.

Several potential corridors have already been identified; a few examples include downtown Indianapolis to the airport, downtown to



Fishers, Anderson to Shelbyville, and Plainfield to Brownsburg. These are only a few of the many routes being considered as options.

The second phase considers different technology options, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of over a dozen different rapid transit technologies. After considering many candidates, including, but not limited to, commuter rail, guided bus, and conventional light rail

transit, the planners recommended a combination approach.

By blending several transit technologies within an easy-to-use network, accessibility, adaptability and responsiveness to capacity can be maximized, while environmental impacts are minimized. No option has been selected nor ruled out. The final selection of recommended transit technologies will be made during future study phases, following a competitive evaluation process and a period for extensive public involvement.

The MPO recognizes that no matter how effective, economically feasible, or environmentally sensitive a regional rapid transit system is, it won't reduce traffic congestion or improve air quality unless the public accepts the system and uses it. Therefore, DIRECTIONS staff is encouraging public input and can be contacted on the web at indygov.org/indympo/directions or for more information call (317) 327-5142.

...Difference

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current conditions and character of structures and uses within each district; the most desirable use for which the land is adapted; the conservation of property values; and reasonable development and growth of the district.

The value of the Comprehensive Plan can be seen in the outcome that occurs as a result of the plan's development and existence.

While, the decisions regarding future land use are governed by zoning laws, the formation of those laws is guided by the Comprehensive Plan. Better plans will lead to better zoning, better future development, and ultimately better, more

- United North East Neighborhood Plan.

The Washington Township Planning Area includes all portions of the township except those covered by:

- 38th Street Corridor Study
- Broad Ripple Village Plan
- Butler Tarkington Neighborhood Plan
- Keystone Avenue Corridor Plan
- Keystone Kessler Area Plan
- Meridian Kessler Area Plan
- Michigan Road Corridor Plan, and
- United North East Neighborhood

Use this form to order the Indianapolis Insight Plan Community Values Component, the Indianapolis Insight Land Use Mapping Handbook or the Indianapolis Development Assets (IDA) book.

The Community Values Component guides development of the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan update and also includes planning principles, value statements and recommendations for new and revised policies, procedures, programs, and ordinances. The first copy is available free of charge. Additional copies are \$5.00.

The Land Use Mapping Handbook is a short, user-friendly guide to the land use mapping process. The Land Use Mapping Handbook is available free of charge.

The Indianapolis Development Assets book is an atlas of useful information on the population, economy, natural resources transportation, infrastructure government, housing and quality of life in Marion County. The IDA book is available for \$15.00.

To receive copies of these documents, please return this form to:
Division of Planning, Comprehensive Planning Section
1841 City-County Building
200 East Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Or fax it to the Comprehensive Planning Section at 327-5103.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

- ☐ Indianapolis Insight Plan, Community Values Component
☐ Indianapolis Insight Land Use Mapping Handbook
☐ Indianapolis Development Assets Book

What Happens...

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tent with one another, and in areas that are built-up, there is typically not enough land for the store to expand. Moving to a new location not only seems to be the best plan, but may be the only opportunity for the store's expansion. The Kohl's store on the eastside of Indianapolis is a prime example of this. The company would like an outlet that is 50% larger than what currently exists, but will have to relocate the store to find a site large enough.

While greyfields present their own unique set of problems, they still possess some strong advantages for potential redevelopment,

including access to existing infrastructure, public transportation, dense populations and large lots. Even if the site is no longer profitable as a retail outlet, it still has economic value to be successfully reclaimed for some other use.

Utilizing the large land areas offered by greyfields, redevelopers have experimented with mixed-use and transit-oriented development. Replacing parking lots with garages, big box stores with smaller neighborhood retail, and including residential units have all been proven successful ways to revitalize old retail sites.

Indianapolis has begun

taking an active role in helping communities redevelop greyfield sites in several areas, specifically on the eastside of the city. Using economic development incentives, new uses for greyfields have found the old sites and buildings a satisfactory home, while improving community character and economic opportunity, stability, and viability. As we progress with the Comprehensive Planning Process, we must be aware of the unique difficulties that greyfields present to us, as well as the opportunities that exist to turn these lots back into economically viable sites that the community is ready to support.



The View: Newsletter for the Update
of the Indianapolis-Marion County
Comprehensive Plan
City of Indianapolis
Comprehensive Planning
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Meeting Dates For Washington And Warren Townships

The Land Use Mapping Phase of the Indianapolis Insight Plan continues to host meetings with concerned citizens and neighborhood groups about the planning areas of Marion County's Washington and Warren Townships. At these meetings, recommended land uses will be proposed for each parcel of land within the planning areas.

Approximately seven meetings will be hosted for each, the Washington and Lawrence Township Planning Areas. **All meetings begin at 7 p.m.** and are open to Marion County residents who wish to participate.

The first four Washington Township Planning Area meetings will be held at the Holliday Park Nature Center, located at 6349 Spring Mill Road, on the following

dates:

- Monday, July 7
- Monday, July 28
- Monday, August 18
- Monday, September 8

The first three meetings for the Warren Township Planning Area will be held as follows:

- Monday, July 14
Warren Township Government Center
501 North Post Road
- Monday, August 4
Warren Township Government Center
501 North Post Road
- Monday, August 25 at 7pm
Washington Park East Cemetery Community Life Center
10612 East Washington Street

Although the planning area meetings are being held on a town-

ship-by-township basis, the results from each township will be combined into an overall Land Use Plan for Marion County.

Approximately seven meetings are scheduled for each of the planning areas. However, more meetings will be scheduled if it is determined that the extra meetings are needed to complete the work. The content of each meeting will build upon the outcome of the previous meetings.

The planning areas are loosely based on townships. Areas with neighborhood or corridor plans will not be re-planned. The few portions of Center Township not covered by a neighborhood or corridor plan will be planned along with the geographically closest outer township.

The Warren Township Planning
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